

STAT
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HOUSTON
WILSON

When a plane loaded with high explosive cargo set off from Texas on a mission to terrorist Libya, Reginald Slocombe said he contacted his business partner, ex-CIA agent Edwin Wilson, with the long-awaited message.

"The bird has flown the coop," was the message according to Slocombe, who is testifying against Wilson in Houston.

"He (Wilson) had been on my case to get it done and now I could say it's gone. The plane is gone."

Slocombe, an unindicted co-conspirator in the case, testified Monday that Wilson told him he was no longer working for the CIA.

But Wilson, 54, a multimillionaire who spent 15 years in undercover spy operations with the CIA, claims he was working with high-level American government officials on a secret mission when the explosive plastic materials were sent to Libya in October 1977. The federal government says Wilson sent the weapons to "line his pockets" with money.

Heavy security surrounds the trial, now in its second week, with about 10 armed federal marshals guarding the courtroom, judge, jury and Wilson. Two federal prosecutors and at least five government witnesses against Wilson allegedly have been placed on a hit list, penned by Wilson while he was in a New York jail cell.

Slocombe, one of those on the alleged hit list, said he first met Wilson in 1976 or 1977 when Wilson offered him a job. At that time, Slocombe said, "(Wilson) said he was no longer associated with the CIA."

Also testifying Monday was an American lawyer, Edward Coughlin Jr., who lives in Geneva, Switzerland, and handled Wilson's financial affairs in 1977.

Coughlin, also named on the alleged contract killing list, testified that in August 1977 a \$900,000 deposit was made in Wilson's Swiss bank account from the Libyan government bank. A withdrawal amounting to \$585,000 was made and transferred to another numbered account, belonging to California weapons expert Jerome Brower, who testified he sold 42,300 pounds of the explosive plastics to Wilson for shipment to the Libyan soldiers. Brower said he charged Wilson \$565,000 for the shipment.

Wilson apparently feared his telephone conversations with Slocombe were being monitored, and instructed Slocombe not to use the office phones when discussing the Libyan deals.

"We felt there was a possibility our phones were tapped at (the business) so we used outside phones," Slocombe said, indicating Wilson thought either the FBI, CIA or other federal authorities were tapping his phone.

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